

# I.W.W. (WORLD) LABOR NEWS

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS  
OF THE WORLD

# INDUSTRIAL WORKER

★ EDUCATION ★ ORGANIZATION ★ EMANCIPATION

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## SOUTH AFRICA FIGHT GOES ON

The Government is continuing to press charges against four leaders of the South African Allied Workers Union, who appeared in court on treason charges February 3rd. On January 29th a SAAWU supporter was acquitted of charges of "furthering the aims of a banned organization" by wearing a T-shirt in the Ciskei reading "SAAWU: An Injury To One Is An Injury To All", when he established that he had been wearing a shirt and windbreaker over the offending T-shirt.

Some 10,000 gold miners struck briefly (and unsuccessfully) in late February demanding the release of imprisoned union activists. Two white police were killed while breaking up a union meeting in late January; seven workers were killed and 571 were fired for participating in the meeting. Some 20,000 platinum workers were fired for striking for better wages and union recognition in early January. Some 1500 miners struck the Foscor and Phalaborwa mines to protest against being forced to work under armed guard and being prohibited from wearing union badges and shirts and singing songs; about 50 were wounded by police.

Nearly 200 Klerksdorp Greyhound busline workers fired for striking last year are organizing a boycott that police are trying to break by forcing people onto busses at gunpoint. On January 22nd police used tear gas to disperse thousands of workers in Zwede township (Eastern Cape) attending a meeting of the Congress of South African Trade Unions. COSATU has called for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners (some 1300 were still being held at the end of 1985), and was preparing to launch a national campaign against the pass laws.

Two new union groupings are in the works. The pro-Government black organization Inkatha is forming a Coordinating Association of Trade Unions based on support for foreign investment in South Africa and for the "free-enterprise system". The CATU is based in the Inkatha stronghold of Natal, and drew around 500 people to a planning meeting—many reportedly bussed in by employers. COSATU responded by criticizing "uncritical support for an exploitative free-enterprise system" and warning employers that sponsorship of sweetheart unions would have serious consequences.

Meanwhile, the Council of Unions of South Africa (a moderate black union grouping affiliated with ICFTU) and the Azanian Council of Trade Unions (a radical nationalist grouping) are nearing merger. An early February meeting found unity on the principles of barring non-blacks from leadership, independence for affiliates, pursuit of international funding, community involvement, and financial accountability to members.

COSATU, however, continues to be South Africa's largest union federation, and the most militant.

### HAYMARKET INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE

On May 1st through 5th, workers from around the world will participate in an International Labor Conference called to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Haymarket events and to discuss the common problems facing workers today.

Unions and rank-and-file activists from Canada, Denmark, England, Japan, Poland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the US, and Venezuela are currently expected to participate, with many others expressing strong interest in attending if circumstances and finances permit.

Details of the Conference will be published in the May *Industrial Worker*. Also being organized are North American speaking tours for delegates whose schedules permit. Among those slated for the tours are delegates from Solidarnosc and the South African Allied Workers Union. Funds are urgently needed to meet the expenses of these tours and to enable delegates from impoverished unions to participate.

Contributions should be sent to the Conference Committee, 3435 North Sheffield (Suite 202), Chicago, Illinois 60657. The IWW has also issued a special assessment for the Conference stamp, which members can obtain from delegates for \$5 or more.



## WORLD LABOR BRIEFS

### AMNESTY FOR BRITISH MINERS

The campaign for freedom for imprisoned miners and for the rehiring of miners sacked for taking part in the 1984-85 British coal strike continues. Some 500 unionists participated in a benefit in the Hull area February 15th attended by miners from Durham, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, and Yorkshire. Some 433 pounds was raised through admissions and raffles, with another 350 donated by a local band. March 2nd saw a national demonstration in London called by the National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign.

Over 500 miners remain sacked, and several are still in jail; the National Union of Mineworkers' funds are still being held in receivership; the Coal Board is violating its agreement; and 15,000 jobs have been lost since the strike through the closure of some 30 pits.

A letter from the Northumberland NUM branch reports on the status of 16 sacked miners in that area, some of whom have never been charged with any offense, while others have been acquitted by the courts. In the year since the strike ended, Branch President Denis Murphy reports that only one sacked miner has been re-instated.

The IWW Chicago Branch continues to collect petitions supporting amnesty, and is about to receive hand-some badges being issued by the NUM for fund-raising purposes.

### THE FRENCH CONNECTION

In a bid to win much-needed publicity for their five-month-old strike for union recognition at Contracts Ltd (a subsidiary of the French Connection, a fashionable men's-garment-manufacturing multinational), workers occupied their Tyne and Wear factory on January 16th. Within an hour the cops had violently evicted the strikers.

While the strikers have been getting solidarity donations from other workers and unions, no industrial action has been forthcoming, and Contracts has moved some business to non-struck plants. However the local trades council, with which the strikers' union is affiliated, has promised a day of action against the strike-breaking plants.

While the strike remains solid, scabs are being recruited and the Government is sending young people enrolled in their Youth Training Scheme (YTS) program to act as strike-breakers. At *Industrial Worker* press time there is no resolution of the conflict in sight.

## SPAIN DOCKERS IN BATTLE

Taking advantage of a Supreme Court decision which declared the 1980 decree creating the Government-run hiring hall (OTP) unconstitutional, the OTP has been abandoning its responsibilities as an employer and the collective agreements it has made with the portworkers' unions. Specifically, the autonomous dockers' union, Coordinadora, points to the following:

-OTP is not paying shop stewards for the time they spend on union business in accordance with the 1980 collective agreement (up to 40 hours per week).

-OTP refuses to pay for time off for family emergencies.

-OTP refuses to pay the legally-required first four days' sick benefit.

-OTP is ignoring legally-binding health and safety regulations and is illegally hiring non-registered workers.

-OTP is practically being dismantled and the Public Administration is refusing to meet with workers' representatives to work out an alternative plan. Meanwhile, private employers are working hard at breaking the unity that dockworkers have built over the years.

Faced with this situation, Coordinadora representatives from all over Spain met at the end of January and decided to call for a general assembly of all portworkers' delegates and unions in Madrid to discuss Coordinadora's alternative to OTP and map out a plan of action to enforce the portworkers' claims.

At this meeting (scheduled for February 21st) Coordinadora was to propose an escalating series of general strikes in all Spanish ports beginning March 6th and continuing on 14 selected dates between March 7th and April 6th. As the *Industrial Worker* goes to press, whether or not these actions will be put into operation is unknown. What is clear is that Spanish portworkers, through their autonomous unions, are continuing to battle for their rights. We hope to have more news of this latest skirmish in our next issue.

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### TELECOMMUNICATIONS BOSSES VERSUS CNTF-PTT

In recent years the IWW's sister organization in France, the French National Confederation of Labor (CNTF), has gained strength in the postal service (PTT), which in France, as in most other European countries, includes telephone and other telecommunications services. But now PTT management is refusing to grant union rights to the CNTF locals at several PTT centers (including Paris 05, Meslay-du-Maine, and Lyon-Montrachet CT).

IWW branches and other union organizations are urged to protest denial of the CNTF's union rights to Minister, PTT, 20 Avenue de Segur, 75700 Paris, France, and to send messages of solidarity to Federation CNTF-PTT, 33 rue des Vignoles, 75020 Paris, France.

TURKISH EXILES and guest workers in France have formed a Confederation of Turkish Anarcho-Syndicalists and have applied for affiliation with the International Workers' Association (IWA). With the help of the CNTF, the IWA's French section, the Turkish revolutionary unionists have produced propaganda for distribution in their homeland, where they hope to set up a section of the International.

REVOLUTIONARY SYNDICALISTS in Latin America have revived the IWA's South American Subsecretariat due to increased anarcho-syndicalist activity in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay. The International's British section, the Direct Action Movement, is raising funds for the support of the Chilean fellow workers. To get more information or contribute to the fund, write to DAM/IWA International Secretary, 16 The Meadows, Hambleton, Selby, West Yorkshire, England.







# LEFT SIDE

So us Stateside working stiffs were recently treated to a new sight on the boob tube: the spectacle of a sizable chunk of our withholding taxes going up in smoke. It certainly is an expensive way of cremating the cream of Freedomland youth, but it provided the newscasters with a convenient opportunity for failing to report that the Mad Coronel was not being the least intimidated by the Blustering Bonzo's muscle-flexing off the shores of Tripoli.

We were later informed that perhaps the launching was a bit premature; but after all, when one makes a state-of-the-union address it ought to be accompanied with a bit of fanfare, which is indeed an old showman's privilege.

The unscheduled demise of a group of young astronauts, representing all races, creeds, and genders of this great democracy, is undeniably tragic; but must it divert our attention from the countless numbers who are daily dying of poisoning in Central America, South Africa, and the Near East, not to mention the millions of starving kids all over the World?

The small-screen pundits seemed quite concerned over the trauma being visited on Freedomland's children at having to witness the catastrophic demise of the flower of space-age youth. But your humble scribe was left with the impression that said pundits were doing their utmost to lay a trauma trip on the little darlings.

I remember that a scant few decades ago, when one of Freedomland's top politicians met an untimely demise, the newscasters were really making a lugubrious production out of it. There was a long take of the funeral train slowly chugging its way through one of the great metropolitan centers, with the voice of the newscaster eulogizing about the pall of sadness that has afflicted the country—when what should appear on the back of the screen but a little black dude, jumping up and down, waving his arms, and generally hamming it up for the cameras. Said rascalion probably didn't even know what was on the train, much less care. All he saw was a TV camera and his chance to make a minor but prominently-publicized splash that was guaranteed to make his peer group green with envy.

It is rather ironic that those of us who take our daily economic inconveniences in philosophical stride, and have no greater worries than who is going to win the next ball game while people around the World continue to die of too much lead and not enough protein, can be hypnotized into spasms of bereavement over the unscheduled retirement of celebrities. Oh yes, we may bitch about the rising cost of everything and the shrinking size of our wallets, but if we were really conscious of what's happening to our human society, it would behoove us to do more than just bitch.

Let's not try to lay guilt trips on our children; we've enough of our own to resolve. This society would be lots better off if it were administered by an unruly mob of spoiled brats, rather than the statesmen and economists who now call the shots. Yes, I would even be willing to turn the whole works over to the juvenile delinquents and take it away from the present crop of geriatric mal-effects.

If poor working-class kids are malicious, there are the extenuating circumstances of poverty, malnutrition, lack of education, and improper guidance. The ones who run our society today are those who have been well fed, well guided, and well educated in the World's top institutions of higher learning to become the statesmen, financiers, and commanding officers that have put us in this present mess. If these are the cream of society, I'm overjoyed to belong to the dregs.

As has been said in this column before, crime on the streets is a pain in the roasts for those of us who put up with all the other fecal matter. But while you can stay off the streets of the muggers and rapists so they can't touch you, what can you do about those muggers and rapists who never show their faces on the streets? Those in their offices and mansions whom you never even see, but who still reach more deeply and more often into your lives and wallets than the street punks ever could?

There is no need for your correspondent to comment on the space-exploration program as a waste of our withholding taxes. The space program will continue anyway, despite my objections. I have only one humble suggestion: Instead of sending schoolteachers out in space capsules, why not give first priority to the statesmen and bankers? Whenever space travel becomes less dangerous, there will be plenty of time to experiment with the less-offensive forms of life.

C. C. Redcloud

## NOTICES

Arthur J. Miller has been elected to serve as General Defense Committee Secretary for another term.

## EDITORIAL:

# But What's It Got To Do With Unionism?

The AFL-CIO reached an agreement with the Bank of New York to offer its 13.1 million members a Master Card with a 14½% annual interest rate (the average rate is 18.5%). The card, which would also be available to "associate members" (who would pay a fraction of normal union dues in exchange for access to union insurance plans and other group benefits, in a move the AFL-CIO hopes would serve as a sort of halfway house to draw workers into unions), would be offered in June to members of several large unions, and is viewed as the first step in developing new benefit and service programs for current and potential unionists.

Meanwhile, the *AFL-CIO News* discourages support of Hormel strikers, arguing that their struggle is merely an effort to gain higher wages than those paid to other Hormel workers (who accepted the concessions Austin Hormel workers have thus far refused to swallow).

At its annual winter meeting in the seaside resort of Bal Harbour, Florida, the AFL-CIO Executive Council announced a plan to resolve jurisdictional disputes internally (hoping to avoid the costly and vituperative campaigns mounted in recent years by AFL-CIO affiliates against one another), and made broad statements about the favorable prospects for the labor movement and the importance of labor solidarity.

But last January the federation took out a Taft-Hartley injunction against 12 workers who struck its Food and Allied Service Trades department for equal pay, hoping to bar them from seeking the support of other AFL-CIO workers.

A campaign by the AFL-CIO to encourage workers with Shell Oil credit cards to turn them in and boycott Shell products as a protest against the company's South African labor policies is getting massive play in the federation's press.

But the February 15th issue of *The Nation* reports that the AFL-CIO's Asian American Free Labor Institute is using members' dues and US Government funds to undermine militant independent unions and bolster pro-government unions in South Korea and the Philippines. In France, meanwhile, another AFL-CIO institute is funneling government funds to groups with fascist ties.

The federation bemoans government economic policies that have increased unemployment and poverty, but in the letters columns of several union papers (most recently the *Mineworkers'*) members note that they are required to work overtime or be fired. The average workweek in the US is now up to 48 hours, even though record numbers of workers can find only part-time jobs. In several industries 48- and 56-hour weeks are not uncommon—especially in unionized plants. Little wonder that it's been 30 years since the AFL-CIO mounted a serious campaign for a shorter workweek.

Productivity has more than doubled since then, but are we living twice as well? No—our productivity gains have been siphoned off to support the arms race, to pay for more parasites, and to fatten our bosses' profits. The six-hour day should have—and could have—been won 30 years ago. A four-hour day is now long overdue, yet the AFL-CIO hesitates to fight for even a 35-hour week.



Thousands of workers are being killed and injured on the job every month; yet rather than organize rank-and-file direct action to shut down unsafe jobs or make them safe, the AFL-CIO lobbies for stronger laws. Employers are taking advantage of high unemployment and desperate economic conditions in other countries to demand concessions and enforce speedups; yet the AFL-CIO can offer nothing better than class collaboration and protectionist barriers. Where we strike, employers shift production to other plants throughout the country and around the world. The scab goods produced there (often under union contract) are then transported and sold by union members who never give their scabbing a second thought.

Throughout the entire world, workers are under attack by giant corporations and national governments with investment strategies and austerity schemes to pit us against each other. Only global labor solidarity can enable us to defeat these attacks and advance toward workers' emancipation.

The AFL-CIO and kindred organizations around the world have repeatedly shown themselves incapable of building the kind of solidarity that labor needs to win. The Industrial Workers of the World stands for a different kind of unionism—solid organization to put an end to the exploitation of our class. Won't you join us?

Jon Bekken

## Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World

THE WORKING CLASS AND THE EMPLOYING CLASS HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON! THERE CAN BE NO PEACE SO LONG AS HUNGER AND WANT ARE FOUND AMONG MILLIONS OF WORKING PEOPLE AND THE FEW, WHO MAKE UP THE EMPLOYING CLASS, HAVE ALL THE GOOD THINGS OF LIFE.

BETWEEN THESE TWO CLASSES A STRUGGLE MUST GO ON UNTIL THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD ORGANIZE AS A CLASS, TAKE POSSESSION OF THE EARTH AND THE MACHINERY OF PRODUCTION, AND ABOLISH THE WAGE SYSTEM.

WE FIND THAT THE CENTERING OF THE MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRIES INTO FEWER AND FEWER HANDS MAKES THE TRADE UNIONS UNABLE TO COPE WITH THE EVER GROWING POWER OF THE EMPLOYING CLASS. THE TRADE UNIONS FOSTER A STATE OF AFFAIRS WHICH ALLOWS ONE SET OF WORKERS TO BE PITTED AGAINST ANOTHER SET OF WORKERS IN THE SAME INDUSTRY, THEREBY HELPING DEFEAT ONE ANOTHER IN WAGE WARS. MOREOVER, THE TRADE UNIONS AID THE EMPLOYING CLASS TO MISLEAD THE WORKERS INTO THE BELIEF THAT THE WORKING CLASS HAVE INTERESTS IN COMMON WITH THEIR EMPLOYERS.

THESE CONDITIONS CAN BE CHANGED AND THE INTEREST OF THE WORKING CLASS UPHOLD ONLY BY AN ORGANIZATION FORMED IN SUCH A WAY THAT ALL ITS MEMBERS IN ANY ONE INDUSTRY, OR IN ALL INDUSTRIES IF NECESSARY, CEASE WORK WHENEVER A STRIKE OR LOCKOUT IS ON IN ANY DEPARTMENT THEREOF, THUS MAKING AN INJURY TO ONE AN INJURY TO ALL.

INSTEAD OF THE CONSERVATIVE MOTTO, "A FAIR DAY'S WAGE FOR FAIR DAY'S WORK," WE MUST INSCRIBE ON OUR BANNER THE REVOLUTIONARY WATCHWORD, "ABOLITION OF THE WAGE SYSTEM."

IT IS THE HISTORIC MISSION OF THE WORKING CLASS TO DO AWAY WITH CAPITALISM. THE ARMY OF PRODUCTION MUST BE ORGANIZED, NOT ONLY FOR THE EVERY-DAY STRUGGLE WITH CAPITALISTS, BUT ALSO TO CARRY ON PRODUCTION WHEN CAPITALISM SHALL HAVE BEEN OVERTHROWN. BY ORGANIZING INDUSTRIALLY WE ARE FORMING THE STRUCTURE OF THE NEW SOCIETY WITHIN THE SHELL OF THE OLD.

## LUST FOR POWER

Jeane Kirkpatrick may have performed a valuable service for American democracy by giving us a good look at the Reagan Administration's true face.

In a recent newspaper column, Mrs. Kirkpatrick denounced Professor Abram Chayes of the Harvard Law School for representing Nicaragua in its World Court suit against the US. An American lawyer who thus opposes his own government, Kirkpatrick said, violates "a citizen's obligation to support decisions made through normal democratic processes."

But by what "normal democratic process" did the American people approve of a war against Nicaragua? Approve the creation and funding of a "contra" force to fight that war? Approve American direction of that force? Approve the use of terrorism? Approve the mining of harbors, the destruction of crops, the bombing of health clinics, the shooting of wedding parties?

As Wobblies, we are pledged to make anti-war propaganda in time of peace and the general strike in time of war. In an Orwellian situation in which government lies and stealth have become "normal democratic processes", we can only organize against this undeclared war with whatever means we can.

## \*EDUCATION \*ORGANIZATION \*EMANCIPATION



AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

ONE UNION ONE LABEL ONE ENEMY

## Industrial Worker

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## THE UNITED STATES SOUTH-AFRICAN STYLE

At Christmas time, 160 young blacks were bussed to white suburban shopping malls each morning to work at minimum-wage jobs. These Brooklyn, New York youth make the trip to New Jersey shopping malls for the six-week Christmas season. The local TV news shows and a black capitalist newspaper have heralded this program as a breakthrough in cutting minority unemployment, but in reality it is nothing more than under-employed blacks doing the dirty work behind suburban consumers' bourgeois fantasies.



# US LABOR NEWS

## TOMATO PICKERS SIGN PACT WITH CAMPBELL SOUP

Migrant farmworkers represented by the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) in Ohio and Michigan have signed labor agreements with the Campbell Soup Company after an eight-year struggle to organize. FLOC has been pressuring the giant food company since 1968 to support the unionization of farmworkers and involve them in three-way contract negotiations with Midwestern growers.

One contract covers workers on 20 tomato farms in Northwestern Ohio for the next three growing seasons; the other contract covers workers for 12 Michigan cucumber growers on farms operated by Vlastic Foods, a Campbell subsidiary, and is to run for the next four seasons. All Ohio Vlastic cucumber growers have agreed to union-representation elections.

The initial agreement, signed February 19th in Detroit, was said by FLOC president Baldemar Vasquez to mark the first time migrant farmworkers in the Midwest had won medical and hospital insurance and paid holidays. The initial agreement included provisions on compensation, study committees, grievance procedures, union security, dues, worker protection from pesticides, housing, health care, and day-care centers. Wage rates must still be negotiated.

FLOC has suspended the Campbell boycott, pending efforts to win contracts at other farms and resolution of other outstanding issues.

## 14,000 STRIKE CAN MAKERS

Nearly 14,000 Steelworkers struck four major container manufacturers February 17th after rejecting a proposed contract featuring a three-year freeze and a one-time 400-dollar bonus. Nearly 90 plants in the US and Canada were struck, shutting down much of the industry's production. The companies are refusing to negotiate on an industry-wide basis, but are offering similar terms, claiming that the expired master contract froze wages for almost three years.

Nearly a thousand members of the International Association of Machinists who work at the struck plants under separate agreements due to expire in April are reportedly honoring picket lines, though production continues at other plants where the IAM is the sole representative.

## MEATPACKERS FACE MORE CONCESSIONS

Workers at Livonia, Michigan's Hygrade Food Products plant accepted over \$2 in wage and benefit concessions to end an eight-week strike against one of Michigan's most profitable meatpacking companies. When they struck in early December, the company was demanding nearly \$5 in concessions; before the strike, workers made \$10.69. That wage had been frozen since 1982, when workers ended the concessions spiral. Now workers will earn only \$9.50, and have lost 80¢ an hour in benefits as well—a pay cut sure to lead Hygrade's competitors to seek deeper concessions from their workforces in the near future.

Meanwhile, 600 workers at Detroit's Thorn Apple Valley meatpacking plant struck in mid-February after rejecting 6-to-1 a concessions contract recommended by UFCW local officials. The contract would have cut some wages, frozen the rest, reduced break time, cut health insurance, required workers to pay for equipment used on the job, and reduced overtime protections. Several strikers have been arrested for preventing trucks bearing meat from leaving the plant, and the strike is still under way at press time.

## Economic Retrogression On Almost All Fronts

Yuppies do exist, of course, but they are the exception, not the rule. The contrast between the Young Upward-Mobile Professionals and the vast majority of the so-called baby boomers—those 78 million Americans born between 1946 and 1964—is striking.

The era in which the baby boomers began coming of age—1973 through 1984—was one in which neither wages nor family income grew. Real wages increased an average of 2.5% to 3% per year between 1949 and 1973, and median family income doubled from \$14,000 a year to \$28,000 a year (in 1984 dollars). Since 1973, however, wage growth has slowed and median family income has actually dropped—from a peak of \$28,167 in 1973 to \$26,433 in 1984. The increase in two-earner families during this period has only partially cushioned the fall.

The highest-paid wage group in the US labor force are the country's 400,000 miners, with a unionized annual salary of \$30,170. Retail workers—37% of whom work part-time—are the lowest paid, at \$10,405. Retail clerks total 16 million—15% of the workforce—and have a job-turnover rate of 15 to 20% annually.

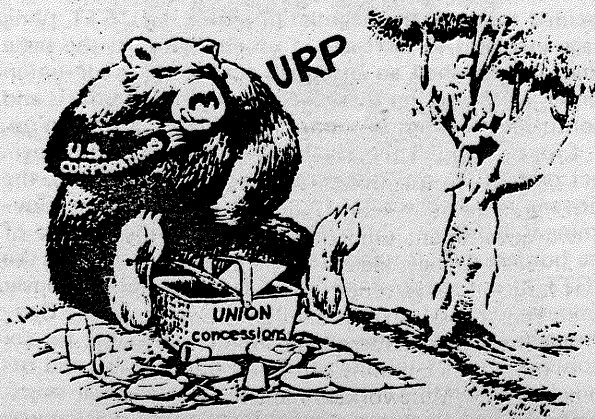
Alaska has the highest average annual pay (\$28,806), followed by the District of Columbia, Michigan, New York, and Connecticut. The lowest salaries are paid in

## GE STRUCK OVER SUSPENSION

Some 3700 workers—about half the unionized workforce—briefly struck a Lynn, Massachusetts GE aircraft-engine plant February 21st, protesting the suspension of a shop steward. The union says it has hundreds of backlogged grievances, and decided on strike action when a steward was suspended for a week for allegedly talking back to a supervisor.

## MORE GM CONCESSIONS

By a two-thirds majority, UAW members at General Motors' Fairfax assembly plant in Kansas City, Kansas have accepted a concessionary five-year contract undermining work rules, seniority, and grievance procedures. The changes are justified by terms such as "mutual trust and respect" and "recognition" that union and management are "dependent" on one another. (We workers can run the plants without the bosses, however, even though they can't run them without us. Try it sometime.) Union members opposed to the concessions charge that they will enable GM to eliminate some 1500 jobs through automation, "outsourcing" (subcontracting), speedup, and work-rule changes.



"We can feed 'em a few scraps, and they'll leave you alone!"

## AFL-CIO MEETING

At its annual winter meeting in the posh resort town of Bal Harbour, Florida, the AFL-CIO Executive Council approved a plan for mandatory arbitration of organizing-jurisdiction disputes to avoid costly inter-union battles, criticized the Government's economic policies, urged tax reforms, condemned the Marcos vote fraud in the Philippines (reaffirming its support for the conservative Trade Union Congress of the Philippines), and decided to establish a cut-rate credit card for AFL-CIO members which would be the center of a new benefits package aimed at attracting new members to the federation. The AFL-CIO is establishing a corporation to administer the benefits.

The Council also discussed an ongoing eight-union effort to organize Blue Shield/Blue Cross, established an office for corporate campaigns, and refused to allow striking Hormel workers to address the Council with a plea for support. Angry confrontations between Robert Harbrandt, president of the federation's food division, and P-9 president Jim Guyette and strategist Ray Rogers upstaged much of the meeting. Rogers termed UFCW president William Wynn—who has consistently opposed the strike and threatened to force a settlement during the meeting—"one of the most anti-union people I have ever come across". AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland came out against the strike February 17th.

South Dakota (\$13,532), with Mississippi and Maine only slightly higher.

In all, 33.7 million people, or 14.4% of the US population, have incomes below the poverty level. There are 4.4 million more poor Americans today than in 1980, and 8.3 million more than in 1970. The number of people living in poverty is, in fact, greater than at any other time since 1959, when 39.5 million people, or 22.4% of the population, were poor. Of the 33.7 million Americans now living in poverty, 23 million (68%) are white, more than 13 million (40%) are under 18, and more than 19 million (57%) are female.

Since 1973, the share of the national income going to families with children has dropped 19%. Part of the drop is accounted for by the rise of single-parent families—from 16.4% of all families in 1973 to 24.7% in 1984. Families headed by single women have a mean income of \$13,257. Families with children now account for 53.3% of the nation's population, down from 61.5% in 1973. But their share of the national income since 1973 has fallen even faster, from 40.2% to 32.6%.

But those who are poorer than ever before, if they wonder where the money went, should remember that now the rich are richer than ever before.



**EMF FEARS:** As the alert readers of this column will remember, one of the major questions about the safety of VDTs involves "non-ionizing" or "electromagnetic" radiations. Well, VDT operators aren't the only ones exposed to these types of radiation. A study published in the October issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives* reveals that workers exposed to electromagnetic fields (the study included power-plant workers; electrical, radio, and television technicians; electrical and telephone-line maintenance workers; aluminum workers; motion-picture projectionists; radio and telegraph operators; and arc welders) suffer 61% more deaths from leukemia and 64% more deaths from lymphomas (a related disease) than the general population. Another study published in the June 1985 *Journal of Occupational Medicine* shows that such workers suffer 93% more deaths from cancer of the brain than the general population.

While VDT operators were not in either study, the workers studied are exposed to similar types of radiation to those emitted by most VDTs. (It must be noted that it is not certain what levels of radiation the workers studied were exposed to, or how these levels compare with VDT radiations.) These radiations can be shielded against fairly easily, but in most workplaces it will take union action to interest employers in paying for such shielding.

**DEATH RIDES THE ROADS:** Recently-released figures from the US Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety show that the highway truck-accident rate rose 18% from 1983 to 1984. In 1984 there were 37,000 trucking accidents, causing 2800 deaths and 30,000 injuries. It is generally agreed by industry analysts that the 1985 figures will be worse yet. The trucking bosses (surprise, surprise) are pointing the finger at drivers, and are using private detectives and blood and urine tests (despite the high number of false positive—and for that matter false negative—results that private labs have been turning out lately) to weed out "unfit" drivers.

In fact, as is so often the case, economics is at the bottom of it all. Since US trucking was deregulated, eliminating the near-monopolies enjoyed by many established trucking companies, profits have fallen. Between 1978 and 1984, trucking revenues went up 47% while expenses went up 51% (supervisory salaries doubled during this time, while drivers' pay has stayed the same or fallen). As a result, companies have sacrificed safety to bolster profits. Truck maintenance has been cut back, and drivers have been forced to work longer hours with fewer breaks. In addition, many trucks that would have been scrapped before deregulation are being kept on the road.

Union action to maintain safety standards is urgently needed. Unfortunately, the major drivers' union, the Teamsters, is placing its hopes on improving the seldom-enforced Government safety regulations—while granting organized trucking companies a breathtaking range of work-rule concessions. A different kind of unionism is needed.

**GOING UP:** Truckers aren't the only ones enjoying deteriorating health and safety conditions. From 1983 to 1985, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, reported occupational mishaps in private industry rose slightly more than 5%—to 5,300,000 injuries, 124,800 illnesses, and 3,740 deaths.

**MINERS IN WHITE:** In Sweden, nurses and nursing assistants are called "white miners". That this nickname has its elements of truth is seen in a study of 550 nurses published in the July 1985 *Journal of Occupational Medicine*. Some 52% reported back injuries within six months of the study, and 44% within two weeks. While 29% required medication for their injuries and 9% missed work because of back pain, only 3.8% filed for workers' compensation, and less than 1% received it. Since the number receiving (or in some cases filing for) compensation for injuries or illness is also the number officially counted as being ill or injured on the job, it's easy to see how much (or how little) the official figures tell us.

**WHITE LUNGS:** One of the best known and most widespread occupational hazards is asbestos. Asbestos is known to cause cancer of the lung or colon in many of the workers exposed to it, and to cause disabling lung disease (asbestosis, or white lung) in an even greater proportion. An organization of those exposed to asbestos—the Asbestos Victims of America—has been formed to help asbestos victims seek compensation and to publicize the dangers of asbestos. The AVA can be contacted at PO Box 559, Capitola, California 95010.

R. Christopher, RN

(Thanks to *Convoy-Dispatch* for some of the information used in the above article.)

## NEW HQ OFFICE HOURS

Please make a note that the IWW General Headquarters has changed its office hours. The new hours are 11 am to 7 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. The office will be closed Thursday and Sunday.



# THE UNION RESISTANCE IN TUNISIA

Faced with the economic crisis and the need to implement the "recommendations" of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the various factions of the Tunisian ruling class are trying to muzzle the workers' movement. As early as 1984, the pressure succeeded in breaking the unity of the labor movement, leading to the creation of a yellow union. Now it is a question of putting an end to the independence of the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT), the oldest trade union on the African continent.

Trade-union independence is a recent conquest of the Tunisian workers' movement. Until the 1970s the UGTT had strong ties with the ruling Destourien Socialist Party (PSD), but the growth of workers' struggles and the increasing influence of independent militants within the unions produced space for the growth of a desire for trade-union independence. The arrival of this independence was underscored by the General Strike of January 1978, led by the UGTT: the first since Tunisia gained its own independence. This movement was ended with the massacres of "Black Thursday" (January 26th, 1978) and the repression which followed: police raids, firings, blacklisting, trials.

Held responsible for these events, the General Secretary of the UGTT, Habib Achour, was removed from office and sentenced to 10 years' hard labor. The Government put in his place a more pliant leadership, from February 1978, having at its head Mourredine Hached, the son of one of the founders of the union. The latter organized the Congress of Gafsa, in April of 1981, where Taib Baccouche, a supporter of the Bourguiba Government, was elected as Secretary General. The Congress went on to approve, not without opposition, the PSD proposal that the union include some of its leaders on the PSD's slate in the municipal elections of November 1981.

Nevertheless, a trade-union resistance emerged in the wake of Black Thursday, proclaiming the independence of the union movement and demanding the liberation of Achour. Freed in August of 1979, although placed under surveillance, the latter was re-elected General Secretary of the UGTT in 1983.

## THE BALANCING ACT

The trade-union disputes left the bureaucracy split between the partisans of independence (the Achour sector, supported by the Left) and the defenders of pro-governmental positions (the Baccouche sector and the Right).

After his return to the head of the UGTT, Achour decided on a purge. In November 1983 he forced the resignation of 7 of the 14 members of the Executive Board: those responsible for the UGTT's participation in the municipal elections of 1981. Thanks to the support of the Government these seven created the National Union of Tunisian Workers (UNTT), which despite its small size was successful in breaking the unity of the trade-union movement in Tunisia.

Then things got even worse. In his purification oper-

ation against the Right, Achour had to rely on support from the Left, which consequently gained in influence in the union. This was confirmed throughout 1984 by the mounting workers' struggles beginning with the hunger riots of December 1983 through January 1984. In order to retain his grip on the union, Achour decided to hit the Left this time. He expelled the Left union group L'Étincelle (The Spark) in 1984.

The 16th Congress of the UGTT, held in December 1984, was ambiguous. For the first time in its history, the union held a Congress without the presence of the head of State or his ministers. But at the same time the Achour sector was confirmed in its leadership and the expulsion of the Spark group upheld.

## THE COUNTERATTACK

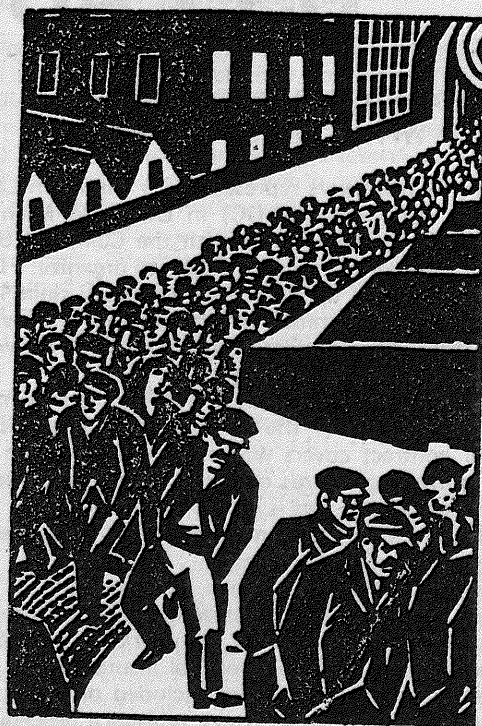
The consequences of the economic crisis continued to be felt. Wages were frozen after 1983 despite an inflation rate of 25% per year. In addition, the Sixth Plan (1982-86) called for cuts in the private sector. For its part, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) "recommended" the re-enforcement of exports, devaluation of the dinar, and a reduction in public spending, above all with respect to employment and wages, as well as in the subsidy of items of mass consumption and investment.

The Mzali Government found itself confronted with the "recommendations" of the IMF, which as everyone knows are really orders, and the growing workers' resistance to austerity. From February 1985 the number of strikes escalated, hitting the mines, railways, air transport, public health and utilities, posts and telecommunications, high schools and universities. The Government decided to block the negotiations with the UGTT, tying wage increases to increases in productivity. At the same time, it unleashed an offensive against the trade-union center. In the spring there were a number of arrests and workplace meetings in support of the UGTT broken up.

Libya provided the Mzali Government with the perfect pretext for a further crackdown. In June 1985, the Libyans expelled several thousand Tunisians. The Government launched a patriotic appeal for the defense of the borders and demanded a social truce. It accused the UGTT of not supporting this truce and of not vigorously condemning the Libyans. At the end of August the Government suspended the UGTT's daily newspaper for six months, stopped the collection of union dues, and recalled 400 union functionaries to their original posts.

In October there was a ministerial shake-up that was clearly anti-Achour and anti-UGTT. The man responsible for Black Thursday as Minister of Security—Nourredine Hached, an old rival of Achour—was named Minister of Labor. Other measures were also taken: the UGTT insurance company, Al Itthad, was seized, as was its hotel Amilcar and its printing plant; and its bank accounts were sequestered.

Simultaneously, the press launched a campaign against two of Achour's sons who were accused of diverting union funds. Finally, the locals of the union, throughout the country, were invaded by the Destourien militia or



by the police, and some provisional committees were established. The occupation of the locals was accompanied by a media campaign on the theme of "arms caches found". Arrests multiplied, and firings for union activity increased.

## RETURN TO START?

In November 1985 Achour was placed under house arrest: His phones were tapped and he was allowed no visitors. The political opposition, whether legal or tolerated, fearing to incur the wrath of the Government, contented itself with publishing a communique denouncing the repression. It didn't want to get too sullied, especially with legislative elections coming up.

Giving way to the repression, the Executive Board of the UGTT decided to negotiate. On December 4th an agreement was signed with the Government: In exchange for the release of detainees and reinstatement of those fired for union activity, the Board would remove Achour from his post of General Secretary. Sadok Allouche was elected General Secretary of the union.

But the Government did not respect its agreements. Worse still, it took advantage of an old dispute with a fishing co-operative, whose management was taken over by the UGTT in 1983. On December 31st Achour was sentenced to one year in prison. In response, the UGTT Executive Board restored Achour to his Secretary-Generalship in January 1986, though he was still in jail, and threatened to launch mass actions if the Government did not live up to its agreements....

(Reprinted from *Agora Libertaire*: translation by Mike Hargis.)

## ...AND AROUND THE WORLD

### SOUTH KOREAN UNIONISTS STILL IN JAIL

Amnesty International has taken up the cause of two groups of South Korean unionists arrested last summer. The South Korean Government changed labor laws in 1980, limiting union activity to the workplace and banning all "third-party intervention"—for example, participation by national unions in local negotiations. Government authorities also closed all national union branches, as well as the Federation of Korean Trade Unions. At the same time, they dismissed many union officials and sent some of those dismissed to labor camps for "purification education".

In March of 1984, officers elected by the membership of the Daewoo Motor Company Union began wage negotiations with the company. In April about 2,000 union members conducted a sit-in to support their pay claims, and a week later management agreed on a wage hike. Although no violence was reported during the negotiations, authorities arrested eight unionists.

The charges against the eight include violations of labor-union law and the law on assemblies and demonstrations. Six of those imprisoned were charged with leading a strike in support of wage increases. Present laws prohibit such strikes, but the agreement reached with Daewoo Motor Company stipulated that striking unionists would not be prosecuted. Another union member was charged with distributing pamphlets advocating increased union democracy.

In a separate labor dispute at the Daewoo Apparel Company in Southwest Seoul in the summer of 1984, the Government arrested and indicted some 35 unionists. Wage negotiations started in April, when unionists demanded a raise in starting wages, which were below even the Government-recommended level. During a breakdown in negotiations, workers sat in until the company agreed to a wage hike.

The union chairperson and two other members were arrested in June and charged with leading strikes and demonstrations. About 250 workers protested the arrests. Reports indicate that as many as 2,000 workers

in eight other factories protested in support of the Daewoo Apparel unionists.

The union actions ended after non-union employees attacked the strikers with iron pipes and wooden clubs. At least 10 strikers were hospitalized, and authorities reported the arrest of more than 150 unionists. Many of those arrested received suspended or short-term sentences, but at least 35 got the book thrown at them.

Amnesty has appealed for the unconditional release of those detained for the non-violent exercise of their rights to free expression and association, and has urged the South Korean Government to treat the prisoners in accordance with internationally-accepted standards, as the organization frequently receives reliable reports that the authorities subject prisoners to physical and mental abuse in efforts to obtain confessions.

(adapted from *Amnesty Action*)

### AN INJURY TO ONE...

ZIMBABWE: Among scores of "disappeared" and imprisoned dissidents rounded up during three years of sustained repression are at least 16 unionists, 15 of whom have been held without charge since March 1985 for resisting the Government's corporatist labor legislation. The other, Phineas Sithole, has been imprisoned since November 1984 for ties to a small splinter party from the ruling ZANU.

GRENADA: When the US invaded Grenada in 1983, two unionists were murdered right on the spot and several others were forced into exile or imprisoned. Chester Humphrey, a union activist and leader in workers' education, was arrested soon after the invasion and has been illegally detained without charges ever since (with one short break), awaiting "an expected demand for extradition to the US". During his first six months of imprisonment he was denied contact with his family and attorney. Now *Direct Action* reports that he is nearing death as a result of a hunger strike begun September 2nd. Fellow workers are encouraged to write Prime Minister Herbert Blaize (Saint Georges, Grenada, West Indies) to urge Humphrey's release and demand an end to the repression

of unions and union activists.

POLAND: Bogdan Lis and Adam Michnik have each had six months chopped off of their prison sentences by Poland's highest appellate court. Wladyslaw Frasyniuk's three-and-a-half-year sentence remains unchanged. The three had appealed on a number of grounds convictions stemming from their efforts to organize an abortive 15-minute general strike. Lis could now be released as early as June, and Michnik in October. Charges against Lech Walesa (charged with slandering the Government) have been dismissed, but the Government has announced the prosecution of Bogdan Borusewicz, a key underground Solidarnosc activist in Gdansk, on charges of illegal union activities and fomenting social unrest.

### US BEGINS TRAINING SALVADORAN DEATH SQUADS

In early February the US began unrestricted training for all of El Salvador's police forces. The program is being conducted under terms of legislation approved late last year when Congress ended a decade-long ban on such police training. Under special exceptions granted last year, American "advisors" previously trained a police urban commando team, an urban "counter-terrorism" unit of the treasury police, and a special investigating unit to be assigned to politically-sensitive crimes.

American officials say, however, that renewed US aid is merited because police are facing a renewed challenge from leftist rebel units infiltrating back into the capital and other urban areas from rebel-held sections of the countryside. US officials also contend that physical disfigurement and killings by police appear to have almost ended in the last year, and that US training and equipping of police will restrain them from abusing political prisoners.

In 1974 Congress prohibited almost all training of foreign police units because of repeated evidence that American-trained security forces were consistently guilty of human-rights violations.

LEBANON: About 40% of the people in Lebanon are currently displaced. About 80% of them have been displaced at least once in the last 14 years.



## sound of a distant drum

There is nought that we the common people love more than the fall of kings, the trapping of presidents, and the circus of leading politicians caught in a revealed web of their own naughty deeds. 3,407,729 unemployed is the highest number ever recorded in these green and cold little islands, but the British people have by now become conditioned to this mass misery as a permanent part of Western civilization for which no political party can offer a solution. Britain's trade-union movement has become a pathetic, broken-backed joke, with falling membership and a fear of taking any action in defense of its members, and right-wing employers openly prepare to drive their workforces into physical confrontation, secure in the knowledge of full Government backing and a trade-union leadership weeping into their wine.

It is tragic that all this has become acceptable and a matter for the inside pages of the national press; for who dare point the puritanical finger at the great gray mass if we turn to the front pages and the TV screen to enjoy politics in high office as Leon Brittan wriggles and sweats before the Parliamentary Defence Select Committee, refusing to reveal "Who leaked the letter?"

Is all this amusing scandal really important? And the answer for the right wing is yes, for it keeps their open attack against the trade-union movement and the working class out of the news-hungry limelight. No longer are employers refusing pay raises in line with the rising cost of living, but for the first time in over half a century they are demanding savage pay cuts and getting them. And as but one example, while the lowest pay for any London workers is the hospital porters' \$2.8012 an hour, in the mass unemployment of North Britain security guards are being hired for only \$1.4060 an hour—the price of a pint of beer in London.

Again and again the stupidity of the betrayal of the striking British miners becomes apparent, for with the defeat of the miners the heart was ripped out of Britain's organized working class. And those who supported Scargill and the miners in that long fight can take a gloomy pride in that everything Scargill predicted has come to pass, with mines being closed and miners being sacked so that even the scab union is failing. But once again comes the test of working-class loyalty, for in an isolated area of East London Rupert Murdoch, the international money man, has built "Fortress" Wapping. He has installed all the latest German technological printing machinery, and behind this high-walled, security-guarded, barbed-wire-festooned building he is seeking to break the Fleet Street trade unions' control of the printing of Britain's national newspapers.

And these papers are no longer produced by the high-paid Fleet printers of the craft-union closed shop, but by the electricians of the renegade right-wing EET and Plumbing Trades, who having signed for higher wages, renounced their closed shop, and accepted a no-strike agreement, are now pushing the switches to churn out the millions of copies of the *Times* and its ilk. The TGWU drivers have been ordered by the TUC not to cross the Wapping printers' picket lines, but the huge lorries roll in and out loaded with papers, while the forlorn printers pickets stand guard at the empty Fleet Street newspaper offices.

And this, comrades, is the pattern for future attacks on the mass working class and its trade-union movement. And as with the poor relations ignored and rejected during the piping days of industrial peace by the high-paid, closed-shop craft unions, our place must still be on that picket line—but carrying our own banner.

Arthur Moyse, London

### BRITISH NEWSPAPER STRIKE

Some 5,000 printing workers continue their strike against Murdoch's newspaper group, which includes the *Times* of London, the *Sunday Times*, the *Sun*, and the *News of the World*. The strike began when unions rejected Murdoch's demands for a no-strike pledge, an end to union work rules, management right to effectively remove any union representative, and an end to the closed shop. The papers are now being printed at a new, highly-automated plant with scabs provided by the electricians' union. Most journalists are also scabbing, and drivers are ignoring orders from their union to honor picket lines.

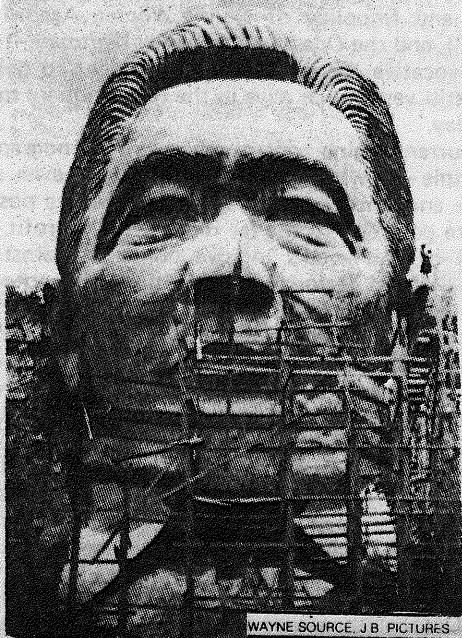
The British Government has weighed in on Murdoch's side. On February 15th police used horses and riot shields to prevent picketing, arresting 35 strikers. On February 11th a High Court judge ordered the seizure of all the assets of Britain's largest printing union, the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (SOGAT) for ordering its members not to handle the struck newspapers. The union ignored a court order to handle the scab goods, arguing that "our members come before money". An estimated \$24 million in assets was seized, and the union was fined \$35,000. Meanwhile, other SOGAT members are reportedly printing color supplements for the Murdoch papers at another plant.

The Murdoch papers are reportedly maintaining about 70% of pre-strike distribution. Virtually the entire scab operation is being carried out by unionized workers. The Direct Action Movement (the British section of the In-

## DUVALIERISM STAYS

Within hours of the departure of Haiti's self-styled president-for-life "Baby Doc" Duvalier and family on February 7th, angry crowds started sacking the family estates. At the Duvaliers' Alpine-style retreat in the hills north of the capital, long-suffering Haitians ripped every door off its hinges, smashed every window, and tore down every chandelier. Two days later everything of value had been carried off or destroyed, but wrappers left behind spoke of the tastes of Haiti's former first family. Among the smashed china and broken crystal one could find a box top from Gucci, an envelope from Cartier, an order form from Saks Fifth Avenue, a box top from B. Altman and Company, a package wrapper from the Parisian sheetmaker D. Porthault.

In early November, Mrs. Duvalier and the family's interior decorator spent several million dollars on a shopping spree in Paris, London, and New York. Several weeks later a petroleum tanker refused to unload in Port-au-Prince because the Government did not have the cash to pay in advance. Transport ground to a halt, and at the end of November the first anti-Government protests broke out.



But it will never be finished: ex-Philippine dictator Marcos's comment to himself.

When the Duvalier family fled, they left behind a looted treasury and a country with one of the lowest per-capita incomes in the Third World: \$379 a year. For the 75% of the people who live in the countryside, the figure is only \$200. By comparison, the per-capita income in Honduras, the second-poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, is \$600 a year. The Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, has a per-capita income of about \$1200. Unemployment in Haiti is estimated at 50%. About 80% of Haitians are illiterate.

Only 30% of this Maryland-size nation is suitable for agriculture, but 43% is under cultivation. Most of the country has been deforested, as the people cut down trees for fuel, lacking access to reasonably-priced substitutes. As a result, much of the topsoil has eroded, ruining much of the country's overburdened farmland. Even with the intense cultivation effort, however, the country must import 33% of its food, which of course the poor cannot afford to buy. One-third of the Haitian people suffer from malnutrition.

Capitalists, however, can feed on anything, and the Haitian assembly business is having a mini-boom. Partly in response to the US Caribbean initiative, more than 200 US companies have set up operation, bringing in parts from the US to be assembled by Haitian workers who make a minimum wage of \$3 a day. Items as diverse as major-league baseballs and dolls of Ernie and Bert of *Sesame Street* fame are put together.

In addition to low wages, US companies have been attracted to Haiti by generous tax concessions, the high productivity of labor (each assembly worker is estimated to be the sole supporter of six family members), and the absence of unions. These factors have claimed jobs from Taiwan and South Korea, where labor costs have risen. For example, people assembling shirts in Haiti earn only about 33¢ an hour, compared with a rate of \$1.20 an hour in South Korea.

Under the Duvaliers, many would-be foreign investors were scared off by the country's image of dictatorship and corruption. It is unlikely that the new Government will do much beyond trying to polish up Haiti's image, for any substantive economic reform would undercut the country's only "asset" in the global division of labor (low wages). CARE relief officials in Haiti are arguing over whether top priority should be given to education or reforestation. No one is asking the working class what they want, and until they organize industrially, they aren't going to be in any position to get it.

plp

### News - Who Will Decide What It Is

Seven people were killed Tuesday, January 29th, when the space shuttle *Challenger* exploded on take-off. For a few minutes Reagan continued to talk with his advisers about his speech planned for that night, then decided to postpone it. The next day the stock market paid its respects by stopping for one minute, then continued sending stocks gently upward. For days about 80% of TV news was devoted to the disaster, and soap-opera addicts complained that it took away their fare.

On Wednesday, January 30th, an air disaster in Mexico killed 26 people, and TV scarcely mentioned it. But more importantly, no commentator viewed either of the disasters against the fact that job accidents in the US kill an average of 25 people every workday—a figure recently released by the Congressional Office of Technology.

The *Challenger* had been scheduled to take off Monday. In Chicago that day the downtown streets were so blocked with crowds to welcome home the victorious Bears that they could not get through, and despite a wind-chill factor of minus 20 degrees Fahrenheit, fans brought their children to get lost and trampled in the crowd, and a school band's instruments were broken or stolen.

On those same days there was an intense struggle at the Hormel plant in Austin, Minnesota to keep out scabs in a strike viewed by many observers of the labor scene as likely to weigh heavily in determining whether workers throughout the US can resist cuts, and thus likely to have far more influence on their lives than the *Challenger*. Yet how much mention did this receive?

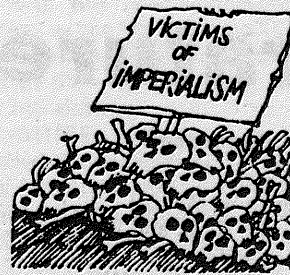
"Games and circuses" is an old Roman formula for handling people disemployed by those they enslaved abroad. American workers today are in a parallel bind. Have you noticed that the one thing it is in good taste to argue about on the job is sports? Not politics, economics, or foreign affairs—just sports.

Thinking in a crowd has to be based on the information and concerns common to that crowd. In a mob this approaches the sub-human level. At the other end of the spectrum, a good committee makes use of the information, logic, and insight it possesses collectively, which greatly exceeds the contribution of any one member.

ternational Workers Association) has called on postal, power, and water workers to cut off all service to the plant, and for a total ban on distribution and handling of the struck papers. Instead, the Trades Union Congress is limiting itself to refusing to meet with journalists from the struck papers.

A good union meeting falls somewhere in between—sometimes engaged in systematic information processing, and other times approaching the spirit of a crowd at a football game: a game which, other things being equal, is most likely to be won by the team whose members think not like the fans, but like a good committee. Is it some informal committee for keeping us in our places that focuses attention for a week on the seven killed on the *Challenger* and not the 25 killed on the average US workday by industry?

FT



### NICARAGUA OFFERS AID TO UNITED STATES FARMERS

Early in January the US Government ended its two-year moratorium on foreclosures of farmers behind in paying off loans from the Farm Home Administration—the lender of last resort. It sent letters to about 80,000 farmers notifying them that they were delinquent in their payments, and hinted that if they didn't take steps they could join the 200,000 farm families forced off of their land each year.

Farmers in Nicaragua, where foreclosures are illegal, were shocked to hear about this barbarous practice from US delegations, and offered to share their land with dispossessed US farmers. As a result, the Nicaraguan Association of Small Farmers has drawn up plans with the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform and the North American Farm Alliance (NAFA) to build a co-operative farm in the Esteli area.

NAFA, based in Ames, Iowa, is organizing US farmers, taking applications from families which have had their farms foreclosed and are willing to bring their equipment and expertise to Nicaragua. The US share of the funding will come primarily from the sale of a farm in California inherited by a man interested in the project, while the Nicaraguan share will come from the sale of 4.2 million pounds of coffee by the Nicaraguan Government.



# HEYWOOD'S CLASSIC PAMPHLETS

*The Collected Works of Ezra H. Heywood*, with introductions by Martin Blatt, M&S Press, Weston, Massachusetts 02193, 1985, 392 pages, cloth only, \$35

This large and well-produced volume collects a dozen pamphlets, reproduced in facsimile, by one of the major figures of 19th Century American anarchism. Ezra Heywood (1829-1893), active in the abolitionist, radical-feminist, and free-love movements, was also an ardent defender of the cause of radical labor, and took part in

## reader's soapbox

### MORE ON NICARAGUA

Fellow Workers:

I want to comment on the exchange in the February *Industrial Worker* between Jon Bekken and supporters of the Nicaraguan Government. It was enlightening, but stopped short of exploring the differences between IWW and "Communist" ideas thoroughly enough.

Undoubtedly one of the basic reasons some people have decided whether to become an IWW or a Communist is the question of how strikes would be treated in an IWW society. Since the IWW is a workers' organization rather than a group of professional elitist politicians alienated from the workers, the IWW would never send in gunmen to shoot the strikers down, or force them to return to their jobs. In an IWW society there would be a policy of full employment, with the possibility of striking workers switching to a different job or type of work, unlike those Communist societies where one is usually forced to keep one job for a lifetime.

But even in an IWW society where all workers agreed on such things as equal pay for all, there could be reasons for a large, paralyzing strike—say in the transportation industry—which could bring misery to millions. How, exactly, would the IWW deal with it? There obviously should be some sort of mediation and arbitration mechanism in place. Unfortunately, a provision for compulsory arbitration, perhaps subject to a vote of the entire IWW, would have to be invoked at some point in the case of a prolonged strike that endangered the populace.

I would like to see more discussion of these matters within the IWW. Perhaps there is something in IWW literature covering this which I am unaware of, or perhaps some of the old-timers know the answers. If so, please come forth and discuss them in these pages. A lot of prospective members may decide whether or not to join the IWW because of this issue.

In the case of Nicaragua, I think it is good that IWWs send medical aid and food to the people of Nicaragua, but along with such donations I think it should be made clear that we encourage the Nicaraguan Government to allow the right to organize independent unions, the right to strike, and freedom of expression. At this time I don't think the IWW should take an official stand one way or another regarding support of the Nicaraguan Government.

Yours for the OBU  
Eugene Nelson

such organizations as the National Labor Union and the New England Labor Reform League. "Of all the individualist anarchists," Martin Blatt affirms in his excellent biographical introduction, "Heywood was the most sympathetic to the social revolutionaries."

In his remarkable pamphlet *The Great Strike* (a study of the 1877 strike wave: the first mass strike in US history), Heywood wrote of "the irrepressible conflict between capital and labor", and argued that workers have the right to defend themselves against the bosses' violence. His "individualist" inclinations notwithstanding, he published collectivist/communist anarchists such as Bakunin and Johann Most in his lively and influential journal, *The Word*. In 1886-87, when the bourgeois press worked itself up into an unprecedented anti-radical hysteria, Heywood bravely supported the Haymarket defendants and even visited them in their Cook County jail cells.

Some of Heywood's pamphlets, concerned with issues that have long since ceased to loom large in public consciousness, inevitably seem dated; a few will doubtless be of interest chiefly to radical antiquarians. Others, however—such as *The Great Strike*, *Uncivil Liberty* (on "the Injustice and Impolicy of Ruling Woman Against Her Consent"), and the *Open Letter to Walt Whitman*—retain their provocative sparkle, and are pertinent to debates that are still very much alive in the revolutionary movement today.

The current raging controversy over "pornography", for example—in which many feminists and even some would-be anarchists have taken up a repressive position heretofore confined to the far Right—would profit from a perusal of Heywood's incisive polemics against that one-man "Moral Majority" of his time, the notorious book-burner Anthony Comstock. It should be noted that Heywood, having incurred Comstock's wrath by daring to advocate sexual freedom, had to serve over two years in prison on trumped-up charges of "obscenity".

It is impossible to read this book without being struck by the vastness of the gulf separating Heywood from today's capitalist usurpers of the "libertarian" label who pretend to his legacy. Ezra Heywood and his co-thinkers—Josiah Warren, Stephen Pearl Andrews, and others—were bold and adventurous free spirits whose whole lives were a struggle toward a better world for all; today's so-called "libertarians", however, tend to be little more than smug apologists for slavery and misery, interested not in freedom but only in a "free market". In hideous contrast to Heywood's exemplary solidarity with insurrectionary workers, recent years have shown us Murray Rothbard, a well-publicized pseudo-libertarian pontiff, characteristically applauding then-Governor Rockefeller for ordering the police massacre of the Attica prison-rioters.

Martin Blatt has done a fine job in bringing to light the work of an important but too-little-known radical theorist and critic of authoritarian institutions. We look forward to his full-length biography of Heywood, to be published by the University of Illinois Press next year.

Franklin Rosemont

**MINIMUM WAGE:** A full-time minimum-wage job pays \$5860 a year at a time when the poverty line for a family of four is \$10,178.

#### Buttons:

- ( ) Build Militant Unionism ..... .75
- ( ) For More of the Good Things of Life ..... .75
- ( ) General Defense Button ..... .35

#### Posters:

- ( ) Joe Hill ..... 10.00
- ( ) General Strike ..... 10.00
- ( ) Huelga General ..... 10.00
- ( ) Draftees of the World Unite ..... 10.00
- ( ) Four Hours Work for Eight Hours Pay ..... 10.00
- ( ) Fat Cat ..... 10.00

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#### LITERATURE DISCOUNT POLICY

Bulk orders of five or more of any item on the IWW Literature List, unless otherwise indicated, may be or-

### GREYHOUND WORKERS NIX CONCESSIONS

Amalgamated Transit Union members recently rejected a proposal to re-open their contract with Greyhound Bus Lines, with nearly 60% voting not to consider further concessions to their contract. Greyhound has responded by announcing plans to close several bus terminals and discontinue service to certain parts of the country, and by transferring its charter division to a proposed non-union subsidiary—a move that would violate the ATU's contract. Greyhound is also reportedly planning on demanding major concessions when the ATU contract expires October 31st.

The company made \$15 million last year—a 10% return on equity—but insists that it wants higher profits. In 1983 Greyhound workers accepted deep concessions following a strike which shut the company down in most cities.

**SECURITY:** The very best we can expect from Star Wars is that 30 years from now the national debt will be a trillion dollars higher than it would have been. The interest on the trillion will approach a hundred dollars per year—money that might have prevented brain damage in newborns, helped create job-training programs for the unemployed, filled potholes in the streets, or simply been retained in citizens' pockets. At worst, slowly-aging weapons platforms, giant mirrors built to reflect laser beams projected from Earth, and computers will continue to circle a lifeless planet until their orbits decay enough to burn up and drop back into the atmosphere.

### INDUSTRIAL WORKER SUSTAINING FUND

(Received During January 1986)

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Many thanks, fellow workers, for your generous support.  
(The *Industrial Worker* loss for January was \$532.32.)

### LUCY PARSONS POSTER AVAILABLE

A new linocut poster by FW Carlos Cortez has been issued to mark the Haymarket centennial. It bears a portrait of Lucy Parsons, and an excerpt from her speech to the IWW's founding convention urging that instead of mounting drawn-out strikes workers should occupy the factories and run them themselves. If anyone has to go hungry, she argued, let it be the owners. Copies are available from the IWW for \$10 postpaid.

dered at a 40% discount if orders are prepaid. We offer a 30% discount on similar orders which we must invoice. Postage will be added to all orders that are not prepaid. Please allow three weeks for delivery. (ND) indicates that no discount is available.

#### AVAILABLE FROM LOCAL IWW GROUPS:

A Workers' Guide to Direct Action: 50¢. New York IWW, PO Box 183, New York 10028.

Fellow Union Member: 10¢ each; bundles of 5 to 15, 5¢; 16 to 500, 3¢; over 500, 2¢. Tacoma/Olympia IWW, 2115 South Sheridan, Tacoma, Washington 98405.

Introduction to the IWW: 10¢ each; bulk rate 40% discount, paid in advance. San Francisco IWW, PO Box 40485, San Francisco, California 94140.

Solidarity Bulletin (monthly publication): \$10 a year. Vancouver IWW, PO Box 34334, Station D, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6J 4P3.

IWW baseball caps (one size fits all): \$4 each, add \$1 each for shipping. University Cellar IU 660 Job Branch (checks to IWW), 341 East Liberty, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107.

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# AROUND OUR UNION

**TACOMA-OLYMPIA:** Fellow Worker Dave Campbell reports that stacks of *Industrial Workers* were handed out at a showing of *Witness to Revolution* (a movie about Anna Louise Strong that includes footage and mention of the IWW: the Everett Massacre, free-speech fights, and a short interview of FW Jack Miller). After the showing Campbell got up and soapboxed, letting people know that the IWW was still around and still fighting for the same goals, to favorable response. Local Wobs have also been active in the anti-apartheid movement, pro-choice rallies and vigils, and building the boycott against Treetop (a local apple-juice producer trying to bust its union). In addition, the Branch leafleted post offices for the Big Mountain defense, and helped organize a program on that struggle which drew 150 people.

**NEW YORK:** The New York Branch had an active and visible presence at a conference January 24th and 25th on last year's AFL-CIO report on challenges to the labor movement. Ten Wobs participated, and three were on panels. Copies of the *Industrial Worker* and other IWW literature were distributed, with nearly \$200 of literature sold. The Branch also sponsored two showings of the Union's print of *The Wobblies* in Poughkeepsie in mid-January, which FW Young reports helped increase IWW visibility and promote local organizing efforts, and covered expenses. FW Poulos reports that the Branch has decided to "adopt" a Hormel family to aid these fellow workers in their strike, and is encouraging members and friends to contribute to this cause. FW Rich McCarthy has been elected corresponding secretary for the Branch, and FW Mary Donovan financial secretary.

## JOIN THE IWW

### THE CORPORATE COMMUNICATION WEB: STRANGLING THE WORLD

Immediately after World War II, US capital took advantage of the war-ravaged economies of other Western nations to establish itself as a dominant force in Europe and in many former European colonies. The US media participated vigorously in this expansionist drive. The Associated Press and United Press International dislodged Reuters and other European news agencies as the major suppliers of international news.

Since then the world has been reported largely through the eyes of American-owned news organizations. Hollywood films, with a considerable assist from the Motion Picture Export Association, saturated the world's movie screens. In the 1950s and early '60s, American television programs, replete with images of US products and services, became the staple fare of viewers of the world. US tourists, advertising, popular music, books and magazines (especially school texts), and the English language itself contributed to the making of a transnational commercial culture.

The International Advertising Association summed up the corporate vision: "world-class products being sold by uniform advertising campaigns on commercial television around the world."

Many in the UN, especially in the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, saw these developments as encouraging signs of progress in poorer countries. UNESCO reports, which were written by US communications experts, generally claimed that the mass media and the products which they advertised provided the motivation for what was approvingly called modernization. This meant adopting, as rapidly as possible, the basic features of private enterprise.

During this period UNESCO, at the urging of the US, endorsed a principle that underlay and indeed ennobled the expansion of the American cultural industry. This was the concept of "free flow of information". Unexceptional and even highly desirable as an abstract standard, in practice the free flow gave a green light to global penetration of the products of US media conglomerates like CBS, Time Incorporated, J. Walter Thompson, 20th Century Fox, and others.

At a number of international meetings of UN bodies and Third World nations in the mid-'70s, the characteristics and extent of the US information monopoly were discussed. The one-way flow of news (center to periphery) was the exact opposite of the profit flow (periphery to center). The drive for change crested in the fall of '76 at the 19th General Conference of UNESCO in Nairobi, Kenya. Here the US delegation was obliged to note the near-unanimity of the opposition it faced, and to acknowledge what Washington had thus far routinely denied—that there were indeed international "information imbalances".

In response, the US offered technological assistance to those nations that wanted to expand their communications capabilities, thereby diverting the demand for a new information order to technical "solutions". It laid the groundwork for another condition of information dependency—one based on the capability to manufacture the hardware of satellites and computers, the construction and ownership of comprehensive electronic data banks, and the creation of the software that sets all the information activity in motion. Since information has become an essential element in the world business

**BELLINGHAM:** The Bellingham Branch has issued a leaflet calling on workers to boycott Treetop juices and applesauce in support of striking Treetop workers. The company, which also imports fruit-juice concentrate from South Africa, instituted a two-tier pay scheme; slashed wages, vacations, and hospital coverage; and implemented concessions at its plants in Cashmere, Selah, and Wenatchee. The Branch is also preparing to open an office at the Fairhaven mill (an IWW shop), and held a party January 8th to commemorate the 1919 General Strike.

**CHICAGO:** Local Wobs, with the help of other local activists, distributed several hundred leaflets at schools, union meetings, demonstrations, and programs on the struggle in South Africa, demanding that treason charges against four leaders of the South African Allied Workers Union be dropped. On February 20th FW Jon Bekken appeared on a local cable TV-radio talk show, speaking on the need for a shorter workweek. Wobs have also joined picket lines in front of the Philippine and South African consulates, and are planning a program on anti-labor repression for late March.

### U CELLAR BRANCH

The Branch has recently donated \$200 toward the IWW's May International Labor Conference, as well as \$100 each to Watsonville cannery and Soma waterbed strikers. The Branch also adopted a unanimous resolution encouraging all IWW members and friends to boycott the Campus, State, and Wayside Theaters—owned by Kerasotes Theaters, which fired its union projectionists and hired scabs to work under substandard conditions at low wages. The Branch sent a letter to IU 660 members urging them to join or at least honor IATSE picket lines at these theaters, and to encourage other workers, families, and friends to join the boycott.

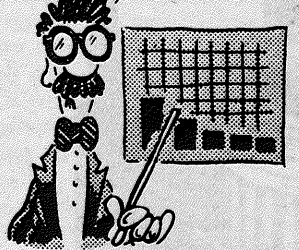
for Box Car Bertha

*Bertha, let me come with you,  
I'll travel light,  
my blanket roll on my back,  
a fry pan, stew pan, tin cup.  
We'll flip a freight,  
ride the rods and the bumpers.  
With luck we'll deck a passenger train  
and go in style,  
lying down looking up at blue sky.  
We'll fling hash in Muncie,  
empty bed pans in Sioux City,  
seal envelopes and lick stamps in Boise,  
model for art classes in Seattle,  
and take off again when the party feels old  
and we find our names on the mail box.*

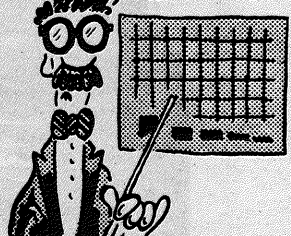
*But you rode your last rail  
long before I was born,  
and I'm the commuter who sleeps dreaming of you  
every morning on the 7:08 out of South Station,  
the wage slave who won't look out the window  
at what she has stopped seeing.*

Willa Schneberg

...THE U.S. CUTS WAGES  
TO COMPETE WITH JAPAN,  
WHO CUTS WAGES TO COMPETE  
WITH KOREA, AND SO ON AND  
SO FORTH...



...UNTIL WORKERS EVERYWHERE  
EARN NEXT TO NOTHING  
AND CAN'T AFFORD TO BUY  
THE PRODUCTS  
PRODUCED...



economy, ownership and control of these new communications links became increasingly important to multinational corporations.

Hence the smearing by US media of any Third World attempts to control the outpourings of US commercial media, and the orchestrated attacks by transnational corporations on the UN. The spokesperson for the Reagan State Department was not shy about spelling out the reasons for the US withdrawal from UNESCO. He explained the action as a response to efforts "to develop normative standards that would impose restraints on Western media and restrict activities of transnational corporations".

And that simply is not done. Furthermore, this is not the first time some branch of the UN has tried to inconvenience multinational corporations: At the height of the Nestle boycott, the UN had the audacity to suggest guidelines for marketing infant formulas; and after Union Carbide's Indian plant disaster killed 3,000 people, the UN voted to require multinational companies in Third World countries to tell their host governments exactly what chemicals they used in their operations.

## IWW DIRECTORY

**ALASKA:** Ruth Sheridan, Delegate, 4704 Kenai, Anchorage 99508. Barry Roderick, Delegate, Box 748, Douglas 99824. Southeast Alaska General Membership Branch, c/o Bird, 1680 Harbor Way, Juneau 99801.

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**GUAM:** Shelby Shapiro, Box 864, Agana 96910.

**IDAHO:** IWW Delegate, Route 1, Box 137, Potlatch 83855.

**ILLINOIS:** Chicago General Membership Branch and General Defense Committee Local 2, 3435 North Sheffield (Suite 202), Chicago 60657, (312) 549-5045. Meetings first Sunday of each month at 1 pm. Champaign-Urbana IWW Group, Jeff Stein, Delegate, Box 2824, Station A, Champaign 61820.

**KANSAS:** General Defense Committee, Arthur J. Miller, Secretary, Box 6130, Kansas City 66106.

**KENTUCKY:** Louisville IWW Group, 2024 Baringer Avenue, Louisville 40204.

**LOUISIANA:** IWW Group, Box 16725, Baton Rouge 70893.

**MANITOBA:** Winnipeg IWW Group, "Haywire Brack", Delegate, Box 161, Station C, Winnipeg R3M 3S7, Canada.

**MASSACHUSETTS:** Boston General Membership Branch Box 454, Cambridge 02139. Meetings first Monday of each month, 522-7090. Western Massachusetts IWW Group, Box 465, Hadley 01035.

**MICHIGAN:** Southeast Michigan General Membership Branch, 42 South Summit, Ypsilanti 48197, (313) 483-3478. Meetings second Sunday of each month. University Cellar IU 660 Job Branch, 341 East Liberty, Ann Arbor 48197. People's Warehouse IU 660 Job Branch, c/o Burkhardt, 727 West Ellsworth Road, Ann Arbor 48104. IWW Delegate, 415 Ethel, Grand Rapids 49506.

**MINNESOTA:** Twin Cities General Membership Branch, Nancy Arthur Collins, Delegate, 1621 Marshall (3), Saint Paul 55104.

**MONTANA:** Clark Fork Valley IWW Group, Box 8562, Missoula 59807, (406) 728-6053. A. L. Nurse, Delegate, Route 5, Box 88, Thompson Falls 59874, (406) 827-3238.

**NEW YORK:** New York General Membership Branch, Box 183, New York City 10028. Delegates: Robert Young, Box 920, Wingdale 12594. Joe O'Shea, Winklers Farm, Towners Road, Carmel 10512. Rochelle Semel, 788 Columbus Avenue (16D), New York 10025, (212) 662-8801. John Hansen, 302 Avenue C, Brooklyn 11218. Henry Pfaff, 77 Eckhart, Buffalo 14207, (716) 877-6073. Jackie Panish, 99-12 65th Road (5-J), Rego Park 11374, (212) 868-1121.

**OHIO:** Southwest Ohio General Membership Branch, Box 92, Clifton 45316, (513) 767-9217. General Defense Committee Local 1, Box 26381, Dayton 45426. Prison Organizing Project, Dennis Wolfel, Number 145-554, Box 45699 Lucasville 45699-0001.

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Tom Hill, Delegate, Box 41928, Philadelphia 19101.

**SOUTH CAROLINA:** Harbinger Publications IU 450, 18 Bluff Road, Columbia 29201, (803) 254-9398.

**TEXAS:** Gilbert Mers, Delegate, 7031 Kernel, Houston 77087, (713) 921-0877. Andrew Lee, Delegate, 3402 Enfield (Apartment B), Austin 78703, (512) 472-7854.

**VIRGINIA:** IWW Delegate, 140 Racefield Drive, Toano 23168.

**WASHINGTON:** Bellingham General Membership Branch Box 1368, Bellingham 98227. Seattle General Membership Branch, 3238 33rd Avenue South, Seattle 98144. Tacoma/Olympia General Membership Branch, 2115 South Sheridan, Tacoma 98405, (206) 272-8119. Bill Turnmire, Delegate, North 10109 Wesley, Spokane 99218, (509) 466-9503. IWW Group, Box 392, Walla Walla 99362.

**WISCONSIN:** Madison General Membership Branch, c/o 1846 Jenifer, Madison 53704, (608) 251-1937 or 249-4287.

### MAY DAY IS COMING...

... and May 1986 marks the Haymarket centenary. Our May issue will carry May Day greetings, and if we get enough we hope to put out a 16-page issue for the occasion, with a special supplement on the International Labor Conference and revolutionary unionism today. Rates for these greetings will be a nominal \$10 for one column inch, \$30 for four column inches, \$50 for a half-column, and \$100 for a half-page. If your greetings ad requires excessive typesetting or layout, or a reduction or enlargement, please add \$5.

This paper carries no commercial advertising, even if smuggled into a May Day greeting.

The deadline for May Day greetings ads (and all other copy for the May Day issue) is March 20th. Get them in earlier if you can. The issue will be mailed out in plenty of time to reach all readers by May Day, so if you want extra copies of this issue to pass around let us know by then (and enclose 15¢ per copy with your order for this special issue).



# The Plight of Russian Workers

"Work in the USSR is a question of honor, of glory, of courage, and of heroism" said Stalin in his time. Today, work still holds an important place in official discussion. But how do Soviet workers really live?

**HOURS:** In 1975, the workday was decreased from 8 to 7 hours. At the same time, the workweek was cut from 6 days to 5½, reducing the number of hours from 48 to 38½. (Official figures show an actual average workweek of 40 hours and 7 minutes.) In 1977 (the last year for which figures are available), Soviet workers had an average of 21 days of vacation a year, as opposed to 18 days in 1955.

According to Soviet authorities, both workday and workweek have been cut further by the "loafing" of the workforce. Newspapers are constantly denouncing "illegal" absences (absences without a doctor's note). For its part, the Soviet trade-union daily *Trud* reports that overtime up to 30 hours a month isn't reported to the Labor Inspectorate, and thus doesn't show up in the statistics. To judge by the number of protest letters published from workers, they often have to work Sundays and legal holidays, despite laws against such work.

Soviet companies make extensive use of overtime to fulfill their required monthly or annual quotas. To get workers to accept overtime, they resort to punishments and bribes (special favors in vacation scheduling, work assignments, and the like). Despite laws forbidding it, it is common for workers to be fired for refusing overtime.

**WAGES:** Piecework wages are paid wherever possible, and there are great differences in pay scales between different sectors and branches of industry. In the service sector, average wages are lower than those in manufacturing by a factor that ranges from two-thirds in the health professions to three-fourths in the retail sector. In the construction sector, because of poor working conditions and a shortage of workers, wages are about 12% higher than in manufacturing.

**THE MOBILITY OF LABOR:** In the manufacturing sector, labor mobility is an important factor. Each year 20% of manufacturing workers and 28% of construction workers quit their jobs. For workers aged 20 to 25, the percentage varies from 50 to 65. In almost all cases, the workers who quit move to jobs in the same region. The Soviet internal-passport system makes it impossible for workers to seek jobs outside their own provinces unless the Government approves. And such approval is unlikely unless one is moving to work in the factories and construction sites of Siberia or Central Asia, attracted by the bonuses and benefits the Government is offering to workers who move there.

**THE SACK:** According to the Soviet labor code of 1970, a worker can be fired for unexcused absence, systematic failure to carry out assigned duties, or inability to do the job, or in the course of closure or implementation of major changes in the workplace. Workers are also fired for political reasons. Any contact with the dissident movement or with so-called "anti-Soviet" activities can result in job loss and long-term unemployment, since the reason for any dismissal is written in the worker's employment book, which contains full details of the worker's employment history and must be presented when applying for work.

**FORCED LABOR:** The Soviet penal labor force includes several million workers. While the number has de-

clined in recent years, it is still frightening. Those sent to the camps include many "economic criminals" (those caught stealing from their workplaces) as well as political opponents of the Government.

Those whose sentences in the camps expire, and those released through amnesties, are part of a special category. They work in normal workplaces, but remain under the control of the penal authorities. Any disciplinary infraction results in their being sent back to the Gulag.

**WORKERS' STANDARD OF LIVING:** The standard of living in the USSR is lower than that in the industrialized Western countries, and in several Eastern European nations (East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia). Economic growth declined between 1975 and 1980. While the specter of famine has been banished, rationing and the lack of certain products continues in many regions.

In the social-service area, education, health care, housing, transportation, and some leisure and vacation activities are free or cheap. In the health-care system, while the USSR has the highest proportion of hospital equipment in the world (123 beds per thousand persons), the quality of health services suffers from three major problems: lack of maintenance of hospital and clinic buildings, lack of medication, and aging equipment. The decline in the health-care budget has not helped matters.

Though the cost of housing is insignificant, it must be noted that in 1977 the average area per tenant in urban areas was 8.2 square meters (about 88 square feet). In the newer industrial centers, almost 10% of the inhabitants are still living in temporary housing. Recently-built housing often turns out to be substandard. An inquiry in Minsk showed that half of the housing units built in 1981 were not in compliance with building and health codes. As in the health-care system, a black market has grown up to supply better services to those who can afford them.

Day-care facilities are inadequate for the number of working mothers, even though few families can exist on one paycheck.

**THE UNIONS:** The union federation in the USSR is a unique organism, with many of the features of a social-welfare agency. Membership is more or less obligatory. In 1977 the Soviet union federation had 13 million members. According to the federation's statutes, its purpose is to "...struggle for the development of socialist production and the accomplishment of the plan, to serve as a school for communism, and to develop socialist discipline".

The union workplace committees are appointed by management, not elected by the membership. A union agreement signed in 1975 at the Zaprosta Metal Works reads in part "...for the purpose of ensuring accomplishment of the plan, management and the union committee will investigate all disruptions of labor discipline (absenteeism, slow work, damage to materials, defective production...), as well as any disruptions of public order in the course of meetings of the union sections or committees. Disciplinary measures will be carried out by the management in co-operation with the union committee. These measures shall include loss of production bonuses by workers found at fault, loss of vacation and health benefits, postponement of housing improvements, and scheduling of vacations during the winter.

**CONFLICTS:** Since the USSR is considered to be the



"workers' state", labor conflicts must be violations of labor law or expressions of "impatience" with slow social progress. In any case, they can never be admitted to be part of a class struggle.

The official structures to regulate conflicts are the labor commissions, which examine possible discrepancies between labor legislation and workplace regulations and practices, and the (management-appointed) union committees, which consider possible violations of union agreements. Letters-to-the-editor columns are often used by both workers and management to explain their versions of conflicts.

The slow decline of the situation of Soviet workers (violation of labor legislation by management, deterioration of the standard of living, late payment of wages) has led to discontent among workers. Generally, the chief forms of conflict are individual. Absenteeism, alcoholism, and job changing are the main ways Soviet workers show their dissatisfaction. In 1973 absenteeism was estimated at more than 12 billion working hours lost. Starting in 1983 the authorities began a campaign against absenteeism, sending the police into cafes and theaters to find workers who were absent without leave.

To pretend that the USSR, with its alienated labor and its well-paid decision-making hierarchy, has emancipated the working class is foolish. In the face of a Communist Party that continues to walk hand in hand with Moscow, and a "far left" that defines the USSR as a "degenerate workers' state" that needs only a political revolution, we must once and for all unmask the USSR for what it really is: a capitalist state in which the employing class (the bureaucracy) collectively exploits the working class.

The appropriation of the means of production can't be limited to a simple transfer or nationalization. Workers must also control the management of the workplaces. The organization of work and threat of political power are not independent of each other. It is no accident that the USSR has developed a bureaucratic system and a division of labor so similar to that of Western capitalism.

(translated from *Le Monde Libertaire*)

## UNIONS SHOULD MODERNIZE

If farmers were to tackle the American grain harvest with scythes and sickles, they would be the counterpart of craft unions dealing with such newspaper magnates as Rupert Murdoch, who publishes the *Sun-Times* in Chicago, the *London Times*, and a host of other papers. He dealt with the London craft unions by moving out of Fleet Street to a modern "strike-proof" facility in the suburbs surrounded by moats and barbed wire, with the latest machines manned by a mere 500. Union electrical workers helped him run with scabs.

In Chicago, the *Tribune* continues to run month after month in spite of picket lines.

British schoolteachers have found a way to cope with such unpleasant situations: They are refusing to do anything that could be considered voluntary. They no longer supervise school lunch periods, attend PTA meetings, handle report cards, or serve on field trips. The tactic is drawing concessions even from old stone-face, stone-age Thatcher.

Since so many women have left home for other workplaces, the Singer Sewing Machine Company, founded in 1851, has decided to quit that line and go into aerospace electronics instead. Many women left home for work in the hope of giving their families a higher standard of living, but things have not worked out that way—which would not have surprised Adam Smith or anyone else who pays attention to supply and demand and its effect on price. They could make that switch in lifestyle successfully on a large scale only if their degree of organization set the tone of the market for labor power.

There has been no increase in American family income in real terms in the last 11 years, according to the Urban Institute, which also notes that while workers' earnings used to increase between ages 40 and 50, they now decline in those years. And now we can expect to live 75 years on the average, and the Census Bureau has started counting robots too. Union wage increases, even in illusionary dollars, are the lowest in 18 years, and many forfeiting COLA are falling behind.

FT

## YOU NOTICE? DID YOU NOTICE? DID

NEVER WILL BE SORRY, said the sneak-attack commander. But then the assault by 7,000 US Marines against 700 Cubans, only 50 of whom were actually



soldiers, was a famous victory—or so President Reagan insisted on his visit to Grenada February 20th. In his speech to the purchased crowd, Reagan likened events in Nicaragua to those that prompted him to order the invasion of Grenada, and declared he would not be satisfied "until all the people of the Americas have joined us in the warm sun of liberty and justice". At the very least, this pathetic junket is the kickoff in a campaign for renewed military aid to the *contras*, if not a barely-veiled threat to invade Nicaragua.

**ASHES TO ASHES:** To cure a leaf from an acre of tobacco, Third World producers burn the wood from an acre of forest. An entire tree must be burned to cure the tobacco for 300 cigarettes. Thus even in heavily-forested Brazil, the Third World's leading tobacco exporter, the tobacco farmers are running out of firewood.

**1380 A YEAR:** According to an Environmental Protection Agency survey, more than 6900 accidents involving toxic waste occurred in the US in the last five years, killing 138 people and injuring 4,717. Three-fourths of the accidents occurred at chemical production or storage plants, and one-fourth during transport. The largest percentage of deaths and injuries (36%) resulted from explosions, leaks, or other failures of chemical-storage systems. Human error accounted for about 12.8%, and unknown causes for the rest. (*International Wildlife*)

**BAD AIR THREATENS CHILDREN:** The health risk from air pollution is as much as six times greater for children than for adults, say medical researchers at the University of California at Irvine. Young bodies are more vulnerable because their air passages are smaller and collect more pollutants. Also, children must breathe more air per unit of body weight to maintain proper metabolism and body temperature. (*International Wildlife*)

**THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION** supports socialist unions: Hard to believe, but true. The National Endowment for Democracy (NEB), a fund set up by Reagan and company in 1983 as a way to "defend democratic values throughout the world", has donated \$12,000 to the Spanish General Workers' Union (UGT), allied with the ruling Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE). This is ostensibly due to the fact that the UGT opposes the Communist Party-controlled Workers' Commissions. Could it be also because the PSOE-UGT support continued membership of Spain in NATO?

**ANTI-COMMUNISM:** The IWW is opposed to the Soviet economic-political system not because it is communist, but because it isn't.

**HARD TIMES:** To protest a paltry pay raise and suspension of a clothing allowance, a thousand dock workers recently showed up for work in their underwear.

**RETROGRESSION:** Some 9% of all contracts signed in 1985 contain two-tier wage clauses.

**IN PENTAGONESE,** the Grenada invasion becomes a "pre-dawn vertical insertion".